THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The big dams are helpful in mitigation of floods, especially if dedicated flood cushion is provided in the storage. The big dams are operated on the basis of specified rule curve as per Operation Manual of Reservoir which helps in flood mitigation.

(b) to (d) No such study has been conducted by the Government.

Special category to Rajasthan

†462. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the condition of Rajasthan is very bad in comparison to States of special category where approximately 2/3 portion of the State is Thar desert and it has been declared drought affected area;

(b) whether Rajasthan would be given status of special category State viewing its condition; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) As per information provided by Central Water Commission, 32 blocks covering an area of 31969 Sq. Km. are covered under Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and 85 blocks covering an area of 198744 Sq. Km. are covered under Desert Development Programme (DDP).

(b) and (c) In order to give a boost to irrigation development in the drought prone areas of the country including in the State of Rajasthan, irrigation projects benefiting drought prone areas are also eligible for 90% of the project cost as central assistance under Accelerated Irrigation benefits Programme (AIBP) under the Ministry of Water Resources, which is at par with the special category States. Further, in normal cases, a new project could be included in AIBP only on completion of an ongoing project of the State, under AIBP. However, the projects benefiting drought prone areas could be considered for inclusion in AIBP in relaxation to one-to-one criteria.

Low level of ground water

†463. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to a study by Planning Commission that the ground water level of 29 per cent block of the country has gone down critically low;

(b) if so, the details of ground water level, and the efforts being made to arrest the going down of the water level, State-wise;

(c) the means of irrigation in the total irrigated area; and

(d) the future plans of Government for irrigation of non-irrigated areas?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.